

Leadership from two cultural perspectives— a tune or discord: Botswana's experience

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This article provides traditional and teachers' academic views on school leadership in Botswana. The traditional view is based on the practice used in the kgotla's system. This is a traditional way of engaging all people in a discussion, which has a community or national focus. The system emanates from the pre-colonial leadership approach based mainly on the Setswana proverb that 'kgosi ke kgosi ka batho'. This literally means a leader (king/kgosi) can lead with the support and active participation of those led in the decision-making processes. The academic view is drawn from teachers' understanding of school leadership in their context. The problem is that headteachers are generally seen to be the only school leaders and they too seem not to be actively involving teachers in the school decision-making processes. Their approach is centred in the modern construct of school leadership, which tends to emphasise the importance of a leader. This is in contrast to the Setswana indigenous view, which focuses on group consensus and effort in leading. The study indicates that the two views could be combined to produce a blend of a nationally rich cultural and modern approach to school leadership. The methodology of the study is based on the interpretive paradigm using the interview and the case study as methods. The research suggests that leadership is a concerted effort and effective leadership is possible if the headteacher is de-centred and the focus is on combining the traditional and modern approaches to develop a 'tune' in leadership. Finally it is argued that preparation for school leaders in Botswana should take cognisance of the Setswana culture so that headteachers do not find themselves isolated as a result of their positions but should cooperate with teachers.

Introduction

Most literature points out that headteachers are central to school effectiveness. Such a view advocates that headteachers' skills, knowledge and styles contribute to the overall achievement of their respective schools' objectives (Buckley 1995, Everard and Morris 1996, Bush and Jackson 2002, Riley and MacBeath 2003). While a number of researchers agree with this view that headteachers are central to school effectiveness, some researchers such as Groon (2002) point out that too much focus

on the leader excludes others who are active participants in leadership. He argues that leadership can be effective if it is understood as a distributed affair. Groon (2002: 10) states that the importance of developing a distributed view of leadership would require schools to 'de-centre' the leader and subscribe to the view that leadership resides 'not solely in the individual at the top, but in every person at entry level who in one way or another, acts as a leader' (Goleman 2002: 14). This view is similar to the indigenous Setswana understanding of leadership. However, this has been eroded by the introduction of the modern education system.

The modern education system in Botswana has been developed since the arrival of the missionaries in the mid nineteenth century (Parsons 1983, Mgadla 2003). When the missionaries introduced modern western education they also introduced a new way of 'managing the modern schools' (Parsons 1983: 24). The school structure became hierarchical, based on Weber's bureaucratic model (Parsons 1983, Bush 1995). Bureaucracy is a formal model that is found in many large organisations. Weber (1947) (in Hoy and Miskel 2001) describes the characteristics of bureaucracy as follows that:

- (i) tasks and responsibilities are standardized;
- (ii) there is division of labour;
- (iii) there is a high level of specialisation;
- (iv) employment is based on technical qualifications;
- (v) there is impersonality in decision-making (Bush 1995, Mullins 2005).

Applied to schools, the bureaucratic model differentiates the headteacher from teachers. The headteacher is placed at the apex of the school structure and has power and authority due to her/his position. There is division of labour between all members of the school, and between the school and the central administration. In this model, teachers are experts and there are formal and informal rules that govern pupils and teachers (Hughes 1985). This is different from the Setswana traditional practice.

The pre-colonial education system and school leadership in Botswana

On the other hand, the pre-colonial schools in Botswana were formal and were divided according to gender: *Bojale* for girls and *Bogwera* for boys. *Bojale*'s main aim was to impart skills in sewing, carving of mortars, and looking after siblings and members of the family. It also taught girls what was expected of women in matrimonial relationships later in life. *Bogwera* taught boys how to make shields, to make clothes from the hides of different animals, to carve, hunt, and look after cattle. They were also taught skills to defend their societies as well as what were deemed to be 'good' attitudes which they were to use in personal and societal relationships. In addition, they were taught responsibilities in matrimonial relationships (Mafela 1997, Kgosi Linchwe II personal communication 2006).

Each *Bogwera* or *Bojale* graduate belonged to *mophato*—'a regiment'—and, irrespective of gender, students who demonstrated talent were chosen to be teachers; this ensured the continuity of future teachers. In addition, leaders were also chosen from each *mophato* on the basis of royalty or on the basis of the individual ability to share their ideas of doing things, listening skills and persuading others in decision-making and administering procedures (story told by Tlhobogang 2002). In this kind of model, division of labour is based on gender, tasks are not standardised, members

do not participate in tasks due to their technical expertise, the leader is a member of the group and she/he does not occupy a hierarchical position. As a result decisions are based on group consensus.

However, the colonial bureaucratically organised school system has laid the foundation for the current educational management system whereby there is a structural relationship between the Ministry of Education at the centre, the headteacher and the teachers in the school. The hierarchical relationship is demonstrated by the Ministry of Education's control of: curriculum content, allocation of funds to school, centralised admissions of primary and secondary school pupils and students respectively, and allocation of teachers to various schools. This relationship can be described as a 'top-down approach' (Ryan 1995). Headteachers control the allocation of funds within schools to departments, and provide the school with overall leadership and management. However, Bush (1995) notes that one of the limitations of this top-down bureaucratic approach is that it assumes that decisions made at the macro level are easily acceptable at the micro level. Some schools in Botswana are not easily governable due to students' indiscipline, which has led to structural vandalism. Teachers do not easily support headteachers and this has resulted in a 'one man show', which has consequences in school effectiveness.

Purpose of the study

The aim and purpose of this study were to find out the difference between the ways the indigenous and modern headteachers led schools, and whether it is possible to improve modern school leadership by adopting certain aspects from the Setswana leadership approach.

Literature review

Policy changes in Botswana introduced throughout the 1990s have introduced a greater range of managerial responsibilities for headteachers to generate greater efficiency and effectiveness (Hood 1991), with the devolution of some powers and considerably more responsibilities away from the centre to the local school and community (Riley and MacBeath 2003). This change altered the bureaucratic practice and introduced school effectiveness, which became a dominant paradigm for the reorganisation of schools in Botswana.

School effectiveness research became popular and taken up in policy circles because it claimed to demonstrate that 'schools make a difference' (Thrupp 1999: 17) to the progress of individual pupils (Hoy and Miskel 1996, Riley and MacBeath 2003, Coleman 2003). The underlying assumption of the effective school research is that schools would make a difference if they included: (i) well-thought out structures and processes for managing, and (ii) the adoption and implementation of innovation for school improvement. However, school effectiveness research regards those who teach in and manage schools to be key actors in the production of better education and that the school head is regarded as playing a key role.

The school effectiveness research's emphasis on the impact of schools on pupils' progress has influenced national and local governments to demand schools to be accountable. Parents too demanded the same. This approach, notes Thrupp (1999:

17), spoke in an 'optimistic and commonsense way to the needs of educators and policymakers' and was widely picked up internationally. Within this effectiveness framing, the role of the headteacher was considered to be central. The key task of the head was to link together and manage the implementation of policies '...ensuring the efficient and effective organisation, administration, management and control of staff, students and other resources to achieve the goals, aims and objectives established at both school and national levels' (Ministry of Education 1994: 7). These expectations seem not to be fulfilled and the question is how could school leadership be improved in Botswana? What factors are missing?

However, school effectiveness research has not been without its critics. Some writers argue that school effectiveness research tends to ignore school culture and issues of organisational change and therefore it is not an effective way of assessing schools (Silver 1994). They also argue that 'effectiveness' is a value-laden concept and therefore it will prove difficult to define, and that there are differing achievement criteria of effectiveness. There is also an argument that headteachers are not central key players in school leadership because Groon (2002) argues school leadership is distributed amongst school community members.

Effective leadership and effective schools in Botswana

The research on school effectiveness influenced conceptions of effective leadership in Botswana policy documents that emphasised school effectiveness. However, its implementation and processes to achieve it were not explicitly explained to headteachers and teachers in schools (Pheko 2005).

Views on school effectiveness' influence can be seen in the terms of reference, discussion and policy recommendations of the 1993 Report of the National Commission on Education where the suggestion was put that education in Botswana needed to be improved through 'access, equity and effective learning which will prepare students more effectively for the world of work' (Botswana Government 1993: iv). The Commission report was concerned not only with widening access, but also with restructuring the management of schools (Botswana Government 1994). In addition, the *Excellence in Education for the New Millennium* (Ministry of Education 1999: 12) states that 'government has identified two key issues which must be taken into consideration for successful education development as: effective management of the education system and cost effectiveness'. There was also an attempt to improve primary and secondary education by introducing a new curriculum and greater participation of parents in school activities.

The change introduced by the Government is consistent with Grace's argument (1995: 7) quoting Bernstein (1977: 181) that 'how a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control'. But the national implementation did not take into account whether schools were ready to introduce new subjects. As a result of the implementation of the new policies all school shortcomings were faced by headteachers. Ironically too, despite the rhetoric around decentralisation and school development, the process that the Ministry of Education used to inform headteachers of the changes was a top-down one (Pheko, 2005). This view is supported by one of the teachers' comments: 'We were told by our headteacher that the new three year JC was going to be implemented in 1996.

When we complained that there were no resources, the reply was it was an instruction from the Ministry of Education' (Pheko, 2005: 145).

However, despite the devolution of many managerial responsibilities to school headteachers, power and authority for the overall direction and administration of education remained firmly in the centre. Thus, despite the language of decentralisation and the idea of change being driven from below, the model continued to be largely top-down, with educational change based on a rational technical process which is 'initiated at the macro level from a central position and passes down to the micro level' of a school (Tabulawa 1997: 103). The top-down model deployed by the Ministry of Education in Botswana has the prerogative to admit and allocate students to secondary schools. It further determines the educational goals while the headteacher has little or no power to refuse the mandated change. In reality there are two conflicting approaches and there is another school of thought that argues that these approaches have failed to make school effective and therefore it is necessary to review school leadership in Botswana because the western leadership perspective has resulted in discord in leading schools in the country.

Distributed leadership

Criticism of leadership as being what I might call 'head-centric' has emerged, led by writers like Groom (2002). The view is that in practice leadership is distributed amongst members of a group that is being led by a chosen or born leader. This necessitates schools to recognise that all members of a school community have a leadership role. It is only the degree of leadership role that differs amongst members within a school setting (Groom 2002). Goleman (2002: 14) argues that distributed leadership therefore means multiple sources of guidance and direction, 'following the contours of expertise in an organisation, made coherent through a common culture'. Elmore (2000: 15) agrees with the above views that it is the 'glue of a common task or goal-improvement of instruction and a common frame of values for how to approach that task'. This view, embraces the possibility of leadership being spread across the organisation and therefore one that seems to be similar to the traditional Setswana way of leading the pre-colonial schools.

Methodology

The methodology used in this research is based on the interpretive paradigm using both the interview and the open-ended questions as methods. Two groups of participants took part in this study. The first group was made up of two traditionalist Batswana who were interviewed and was comprised of a Kgosi (King) of the tribe (which had continued to practice Bojale and Bogwera until the late 1980s) and an experienced Lesoko (traditional teacher of Bogwera). These two were selected on the basis of the knowledge provided by the villagers on who knew the leadership practices of Bogwera or Bojale. In addition to the interview, 16 secondary school teachers participated in completing open-ended questionnaires, this number was made up by eight teachers from each secondary school. These teachers were from two urban schools because I wanted to find out whether the urban teachers have a different view regarding the new and traditional approaches

of leadership. These teachers were randomly selected from the lists provided by each secondary school, which was selected. In the same manner names of all secondary schools in Gaborone were cut and put in a hat and two were randomly selected. This group of teachers was comprised of teachers, senior teachers and heads of department.

Sixteen open-ended questionnaires, a covering letter, and a request for consent were distributed to both schools during the second term of 2006. In addition, the researcher organised a brief meeting with the teachers to explain briefly the aims of the study. Fourteen replies were completed and returned to each school secretary's office as arranged. The researcher went to each school each week to collect responses and it took five weeks to collect 14 responses, which represented an 88 per cent response rate.

Both methods were suitable to provide personal constructs of leadership, which were context based. The interview is narrative whereas the open-ended questions 'invite honest, premix of school in personal comments from respondents' (Punch 2001: 255). The teachers' views are important because they (teachers) are major actors in school activities and play some role in school leadership and management activities for example, as heads of department.

There are limitations to this study because there is an atypical 'selective' mix of views on school leadership in two cities and from two traditionalists who come from two different villages. This therefore may not be replicated nationally and it would be inappropriate to draw direct inferences about leadership views from other teachers and traditionalists in other locations within the country. In consequence, the research material was specifically designed to describe and analyse the views of teachers in those two schools in the cities and that of traditionalists in those villages regarding their constructs of leadership.

Data analysis

In analysing the views of teachers from each of the case study schools and the traditionalists, their responses were combined and compared in order to look for patterns of similarity and difference. The article proceeds by presenting results thematically. From both the questionnaires and the interviews there were many issues raised but the four identified common recurring issues are: the meaning of a leader, understanding of leadership as a context based ideology from both the traditional and modern concepts, the impact of organisational structure on leadership as well as leadership as a concerted effort from societal culture. Additionally, the results of the interview and questionnaire ensured methodological triangulation and provided 'anonymous' quotation to be used within the findings to validate the results.

The findings

The results drawn from this study are grouped into four main themes which are: (i) the meaning of a leader; (ii) leadership as a context based ideology from traditional and modern concepts of leadership—tune or discord; (iii) the impact of organisational structure on leadership; and (iv) leadership as a concerted effort.

The meaning of a leader

Issue one related to the meaning of a leader and how one is identified. All the respondents say that a leader is a person who has certain characteristics which most people do not possess such as the ability to inspire others to follow; share a common vision; be a patient listener; be a participator; be confident; be respectful; and to be a reconciler. The experience of both traditionalists and teachers is that there are two main types of leaders; that is, those who are born with such abilities and those who can be taught these abilities. The first view that leaders are born is based on the traits theory whose origin can be traced back to the great thinker, Aristotle, who believed that individuals are born with unique characteristics that make them leaders. This view has continued to influence many people to assume that leaders are successful because of their natural abilities. From this perception there is a strong assumption that leaders could be born.

The second view is that leaders are 'being born to be made'. One of the teachers said that 'most headteachers are not natural leaders but have learnt to be leaders through practice'. However, the majority of the respondents said unless there is a systematic way of learning how to be a leader and adapt to the societal expectation of being a leader, some headteachers will not be able to acquire all the knowledge and skills required to lead. The view that leadership is acquired knowledge and skills as well as adhering to the expectations of the cultural practices of leadership, considers human beings as being not only capable of, but also motivated toward, learning particular knowledge and skills that will enable them to perform in the organisation that forms part of the organisational culture influenced by the wider social one. For both the traditionalist and teachers there are great changes that are taking place in schools, which are placing new demands on headteachers, most of whom are selected to the post on the basis of their expertise in teaching. A general view from teachers is that the modern approach to school leadership used by headteachers is inadequate and they need to blend it with traditional aspects of leading. To understand how both the traditionalists and teachers understand leadership in their contexts, the traditionalists view on how leaders were selected, groomed and participated in decision-making is presented. This is followed by teachers' views on how their headteachers' lead.

Leadership is a context ideology

Issue two examined the meaning of leadership and its relationship to context. Understanding and meaning of leadership is an issue, which both traditionalists and teachers expressed that it is difficult to neither define nor establish one single common accepted meaning of leadership. In order therefore to put it into context the traditionalist view is presented differently from teachers. One of the traditionalists is highly educated and describes leadership as a process where 'an individual who has been born or selected has an ability to: listen to others on what is desired and considered appropriate, visualise how these can be achieved, have respect for all and then persuade all to participate in decision making in order to achieve their desired goals'. The other traditionalist is not highly educated but described a leader as 'an ethical and moral person who has to do everything in tune with the societal culture of 'those she/he is leading'. For this group of people, leadership is seen in

action when the leader listens and visualises what could benefit those led. In addition, Kgosi (King) said the attitude and behaviour of the leader is central to the group participation in order to inspire those led. In addition the leader is expected to lead in a way that is acceptable. These descriptions also indicate a two-way interaction between the leader and the group. From the traditional point of view leadership is practice and can be seen by those who are led and are participating in it. This group concludes that western leadership theory has resulted in discord because it ignores the culture of those led.

One of the teachers describes leadership as the 'ability of an individual to inspire others to follow and achieve desired goals'. For teachers, the headteacher is a key and central player in encouraging others to understand what could be beneficial for them. The indication is that once the teachers have conceptualised this, they are expected to actively participate in achieving it. Their descriptions indicate that if a leader is not knowledgeable and skilled the school may not be able to achieve the desired goals. Their descriptions emphasise professional bureaucracy and the top-down approach in decision-making. This view is from the western concept of leadership.

The difference between the two groups on how they understand leadership indicates that leadership is a concept which is understood differently by different people even those living in the same country. But the commonality is that there is a leader and those led are expected to be involved in the process of leadership but at different levels of participation as from the traditionalist point of view the leader is a member of a circle, while from the teachers' perspective the school leader is central and has authority and power invested in her/his position. It is also evident that a group or organisational structure influences leadership patterns.

Group/organisational structure and leadership

In analysing issue three that sought to find out the impact of groups and organisational structure on the style a leader adopts, the results show varying differences of views between the traditionalists and teachers. The traditional society has a different fabric as compared to the school, which is based on the bureaucratic model of an organisation. The first discussion focuses on the societal view of education as influenced by the society's aspirations.

Kgosi indicates that 'the old educational system is very different from the current educational system because people worked as a group'. This statement is central to the way education was conducted and relationships of those involved in it. Both Kgosi and Lesoko (teacher of Bogwera) acknowledge that these differences are embedded in the old Setswana social aspirations, which linked education to both personal and social development through acquisition of new skills. Lesoko indicates that 'every member of a mophato learnt to work hard because if individually they fail the group will fail'. The implication is that individual output was seen as a group effort. Kgosi went further to indicate that when mophato was called to carry out a task it was the group which would agree to the process of carrying out such a task and see to it that it was successfully completed. From the traditionalist's point of view the acquisition of new and relevant knowledge was crucial to the society's economic development and increase in productivity. In that way Kgosi said: 'People were able to produce more, consume more and put in reserve surpluses in *difalana*

(indigenous agricultural produce storages). The surplus benefited the society. The group structure therefore was flat. Both the traditionalists emphasised that it was important therefore that the school leader should have an ability to motivate both teachers and students to learn new skills. In addition, a school leader was expected to have the following characteristics: ability to inspire others to follow and agree or disagree with the views expressed by others; persuade others to share a common vision; listen to all under any circumstances; participate in both discussions and carrying out of tasks; be confident in most cases; respectful to all irrespective of gender, ethnicity and social background; and reconcile all at different levels. At Kgotla meetings all people are allowed to say their views without fear. The society expects the leader to enculturate her/his people and was expected to have *botho* (a concept which comprises the following features: humility, manners, respect for others, knowledge, skill, patience and a good listener). This concept of *botho* seems to be understood by traditionalists as they say it is one of the strongholds of the Setswana culture. Slightly fewer teachers mentioned it as an important characteristic of a leader.

The traditionalists' argument is that teachers tended to support their school leader because she/he was socially accepted as a person who has the skill and interest. In addition there was a feeling of collective responsibility. The school leader and teachers were driven by collective subconscious aspiration (psychological). There is an assumption here by the traditionalists that members of such a group expect physical security and satisfaction of certain material needs and in that it will have high expectation of its achievement of the set goal.

These expectations and equal sense of responsibility had made the then educational community to have collective effort to take risks to acquire new forms of knowledge and behaviour and lead and be led within the context of their culture resulting in a tune. This influenced the way a headteacher led because structurally she/he was part of the division, which was structurally connected.

The teachers' view is that headteachers are central to school leadership because they have been given power by the authority vested in their offices. The structure too differentiates a school leader from the rest of the school community members. According to their responses, headteachers share leadership activities with other teachers because they are expected to do so as indicated in the School Development Plan introduced in 1993. But this is limited because the headteacher is expected by the employer to direct rather than get consensus from teachers in order to develop and implement Government decisions. The emphasis shows that the new education system is revolutionary whereby collective aspiration is now a responsibility of a certain number of people in a certain class or a section of a society. This has created a discord amongst Setswana teachers and headteachers. In the same vein acquisition of educational knowledge and skills are central to personal and national developments. However, the educational structure and school structure are hierarchical and therefore, teachers and headteachers' aspirations are not necessarily collective. In addition, the headteacher is not democratically selected and acceptability by the teachers is not confirmed. This results in discord towards general goals. But the headteacher cannot change the perception of teachers because she/he has to implement what the Ministry of Education has ordered. This system is top-down and democratic participation by both teachers and headteachers is limited because they do not have the power in certain decision-making processes, for example, payment of school fees at secondary schools. One teacher says: 'We are made to check

whether our students have paid fees. In addition we are to assess them if they could be exempted from paying. All these decisions are taken without consulting us'. The headteacher has to implement such decisions that are taken at macro level rather than hers/his within their microenvironment of a school.

On the other hand teachers feel that a headteacher has limited power to influence educational decisions taken on behalf of the school she/he leads. Therefore the aspirations are national and they are based on policies developed by the Ministry of Education to meet certain development goals.

Leadership is a concerted effort: creating a tune

Issue four examined whether leadership is centred on the headteacher or if all members of the school community participate and take responsibility for school leadership. All the participants in this study agree that all teachers and headteachers are necessary and crucial to the school leadership. One teacher sums up this view when she says: 'School leadership is not central to a headteacher because the headteacher can only be a leader if teachers, students and non-academic staff members are part of the group which needs a leader'. For such teachers, a headteacher will not be a leader if the rest of the group is absent. In addition, another teacher said: 'I believe teachers too are leaders because some are heads of department while others are class teachers'. In expanding how teachers are leaders most teachers indicated that teachers are competent in their subject areas and therefore are central in inspiring, encouraging and participating in new ways of acquiring the particular subject information. In addition they say teachers have to motivate students to share ideals of education in general. A minority of teachers also say they see students as part of the school leadership team because although they do not choose their teachers and headteachers they accept their authority and knowledge.

These views concur with the traditionalists' view, whose focal point is that from the traditional school, leaders belong to a circle of people involved in community tasks. These constructs of leadership provide a different kind of view that leadership in this context implies active participation of all teachers and their headteachers in their schools' activities. Therefore the cultural influence portrays leadership theory as concerted effort from a school community. The implication is that there is melodious tune between the led and the leader.

Discussion

The results of the study show that there are different ways of understanding what is a leader and that there are different approaches to leadership. In addition there is a clear indication that the traditionalists believe that group structures influence the way leaders of such groups lead. The teachers who presented their perceptions on the way modern western organisational structure operates also believe that school structures have an impact on the way headteachers lead.

For almost three decades, two major educational policies have been implemented in Botswana—albeit changes in the way headteachers are expected to lead and manage schools. Although these changes were focused on the curriculum and provision of basic quality education they embedded views on school leadership.

Consequently literature, that assessed headteachers' ability to perform their leadership roles used leadership theories developed and practiced elsewhere in the world (Commonwealth Secretariat 1996, Riley and MacBeath 2003). In order therefore to improve leadership practices in Botswana the traditional perspective has been neglected and western theories have resulted in leadership discord. The results of this study show that some leaders are born while others are made. This view concurs with that found in the literature (Mullins 2005).

The results of this study also show that traditionalists and teachers in Botswana concur that a school leader is important in the running of the school. Both groups of people agree that a leader stands out from the majority of people as a person who has some of the following characteristics: the ability to inspire others to follow and agree with views expressed; the ability to persuade the majority to share a common vision; to listen; to participate in both discussions and carrying out of tasks; to be confident and a confidant; to be a conciliator; to be respectful and have *botho* (be courteous, respectful, trustworthy). But they also feel that bringing in the traditional perspective of school leadership might result in a better tune of leading. Power needs to be decentralised from the centre to the headteacher who too needs to share it with teachers to create a community of visionary participants in their respective schools. All traditionalists feel *botho* is the central feature in being a 'good' leader. Their perception is based on Setswana proverb 'kgosi ke kgosi ka batho': to them, this proverb has to be relived by leaders. In contrast few teachers expressed that headteachers should have *botho*.

However, the degree of importance of the school leader differs as the traditionalists view the role of the school leader as a coordinating one while teachers view it as a directing one which makes the leader therefore central to the running of the school activities. The traditional view can be located in their lived experiences of their understanding of a school from the cultural background. On the other hand, teachers' views can be located within their practical and theoretical knowledge whereby the school headteacher has limited power and authority within her/his respective school to control it as per the guidelines and rules approved by the Ministry of Education. The teachers' constructs resonates that of school effectiveness literature and bureaucratic theory (Hughes 1985, Riley and MacBeath 2003, Coleman 2003, Bush 2003). The implication is that a school leader's importance and role can be understood from different frames.

In seeking to find out how leadership is perceived by two groups from two different knowledge backgrounds but with equal interest in the running of a school, a question of acquisition of leadership skills was raised. The results are consistent with the subject literature that leadership training is essential, if headteachers are to be effective (Buckley 1995, Everard and Morris 1996, Commonwealth Secretariat 1996, Pheko 2005).

A key reason for understanding the views of the traditionalists and teachers on the concept of leadership is an attempt to find a way in which leadership could be contextualised in a Botswana school, whereby 'good' aspects from the traditional school practice could be assimilated into the modern leadership practice and training. The results show two views. Firstly, that it is possible to change the current school leadership practice whereby more people in school could be given posts of responsibility. However, the emphasis is from the traditionalists because the focus of leadership is rooted in *botho* and the power as well as authority given to the leader by those led. This is summed up by Kgosi that 'a leader has to behave and carry out

decisions as per the expectation and culture of the group'. This view is contrary to the views portrayed by the bureaucratic theory on the role of the authority and power of the leader (Parsons 1983, Hughes 1985, Bush 2003). The same view is expressed in school effectiveness literature, which centres the school leader (Silver 1994, Thrupp 1999, Riley and MacBeath 2003). The view of the traditionalist concurs with Groon (2002) that leadership is a distributed phenomenon that must be contextualised and relevant to meet the needs of the society it is practised in.

Conclusion

This study indicates that leadership is a concept that is context-based but also displays certain characteristics that seem to apply across modern and the traditional cultures. From the Batswana's perspectives, headteachers are not effective leaders because they are caught between the expectation of consulting those they lead and the modern procedure where they occupy a position at the apex of the organisational structure whereby the power is invested in them as occupants and therefore have to direct. This scenario indicates that application of Western ideology and practices of leadership without contextualising it to the Botswana society's culture creates discord between the led and the leader. The suggestion of the participants in this study is that induction for headteachers needs to take cognisance of the traditional practices of Setswana leadership. This calls for changing of the school leadership in Botswana as well as changing of school organisational structure to accommodate consultation rather than the top-down approach, which is currently practised.

In conclusion, there is need for the Ministry of Education to consider how headteachers' leadership styles can be improved especially as the study shows that there is need to take cognisance of the cultural way and infuse it with the modern processes. Leadership is important in schools and therefore for development of education it is important to distribute it amongst members of the school community.

Implications for further research

As the study was conducted in two urban schools from 231 secondary schools countrywide and involved 16 teachers from 10 419 secondary school teachers countrywide (Ministry of Education 2003: 112) and two traditionalists from two villages when almost seven villages used to have traditional schools until the late 1970s, it is not possible to draw generalised conclusions about Botswana's school leadership due to these limitations. Further research that will involve more schools in different settings is necessary. In addition, it is necessary to carry out research to determine the process and procedure that could be employed, and what measures will be needed to put the leadership change in place.

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